6.0 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Cumulative effects on any affected resources as a consequence of the Proposed Action are expected to be negligible. Cumulative effects are caused by the aggregate of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes them. These effects can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7). The cumulative effect analysis in the LANL SWEIS already documents the regional effect of the Expanded Operations Alternative and provides context for this EA. This section considers the Proposed Action and its possible effects on resources as relates to any ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Four resources are dismissed from cumulative effects consideration because it has been determined they would not be affected by the Proposed Action and therefore could not contribute collectively to ongoing or reasonably foreseeable actions (see Table 3). These resources were socio-economics, land use, visual, and environmental justice. Five other resources analyzed in this EA would not contribute significantly to cumulative effects, because the Proposed Action would not have significant long-term or irreversible effects on water quality, air quality, geology (and soils), noise, and human health resources.

Transportation, ecological resources, cultural resources, environmental restoration, and waste management are discussed further in this section. This analysis concludes that there would be insignificant slight cumulative effects on these resources as a consequence of the aggregate of the Proposed Action and past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Moreover, some positive effects to resources, including transportation, infrastructure, and environmental restoration, would occur as a consequence of the Proposed Action controlling access to the LANL TA-3 core area.

Transportation. The Proposed Action would modify the existing LANL and Los Alamos County transportation network by placing access restrictions on vehicles using Pajarito Road and those entering into TA-3. These modifications would reallocate traffic primarily to two of the other three roads leading to Los Alamos town site but not cause significant impacts to the network. The proposed gas line project could affect the transportation network and traffic should the no action alternative to leave it in its current condition within the Main Hill Road right-of-way be selected. This is because future gas line repair or maintenance could require closing the road for some period. The placement of access-control points would be designed and phased to minimize vehicle waits, congestion, and effects on LANL roadways restricted to use by the public, while East Jemez Road (Truck Route) would remain open for unrestricted vehicle access. UC would coordinate with Los Alamos County to assure acceptable emergency response actions during and after the construction. Traffic within the LANL TA-3 area and to vehicle parking lots would be rerouted due to newly constructed road closures into TA-3 and internal access-control points. Access controls would actually enhance traffic safety by restricting vehicles to certain locations and reducing the number of vehicles within the Pajarito corridor and LANL TA-3 area.

Traffic and infrastructure impacts on U.S. Forest Service and Bandelier National Monument areas adjacent to LANL would not change as these lands would likely continue to be used for recreation, habitat management purposes, and timber production (only within the Santa Fe National Forest). Bandelier National Monument has long-term plans for rebuilding its main

access road and possibly relocating parking closer to SR 4, but this should not have an effect on inter-LANL transportation.

Parcels identified for land transfer are outside the proposed access-controlled areas and would not contribute to unforeseen traffic or infrastructure impacts. Similarly, there would be no long-term effects on other infrastructure. These access controls would be expected to enhance the safety and security of LANL utilities.

Ecological Resources. The Proposed Action would involve AEIs that include potential habitat, wetlands, and floodplains. The proposed bypass roads would create corridors of varying width from 50 to 200 ft where some vegetation would be removed or disturbed. Construction within these areas would be accomplished using BMPs to minimize impacts. Structural bridges would be used to span canyons over areas designated as AEIs.

UC is implementing an Integrated Resource Management Plan to coordinate responsible environmental stewardship at LANL that is consistent with its missions. This management plan will also help LANL management operate the facility without incurring adverse cumulative environmental effects pursuant to the SWEIS ROD. The Proposed Action would not contribute significantly to adverse cumulative effects on ecological resources.

Cultural Resources. The Proposed Action would result in demolition of the Building 3-40 high bay, which is eligible for the NRHP. There are a number of actions planned for LANL that would adversely affect LANL historic structures over the next several years, and many of the historic buildings at LANL would be demolished. Examples of buildings that are under consideration for demolition activities include the Administration Building in TA-3, Omega West facility (TA-2), the Manhattan Project detonator buildings at TA-6, several structures at TA-41, several structures at TA-21 related to early thermonuclear weapons, the Hollow at TA-15 where the Rex accelerator was located, several buildings at TA-33 associated with early gun development, and the Van de Graff accelerator (TA-3). Hundreds of buildings are on the LANL excess property list or may be proposed for demolition over the next several years, including most of the permanent buildings that date to the early Cold War era (1947–63). A small number of these buildings may have reuse potential; this potential must be considered as part of NNSA's management of historic properties. In response to these factors, NNSA and UC are preparing a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) in accordance with the mitigation action plan set forth in the SWEIS ROD. This management plan, which is due to be completed by the end of 2002, will address the rapid attrition of historic buildings and will establish a framework for identifying historic properties with exceptional importance in LANL history. The Proposed Action is not expected to result in a significant adverse cumulative effect on historic resources at LANL because the NNSA and the SHPO would negotiate a treatment plan for documenting the importance of Building 3-40 for future reference.

Environmental Restoration. There are eight SWMUs within or nearby the Proposed Action and most of these are located in drainage areas. Any of the PRSs impacted by construction would be sampled, characterized, and remediated as appropriate before construction of the bypass roads and associated facilities by the LANL Environmental Remediation Program. Wastes generated by these remediation efforts would be handled in accordance with applicable RCRA procedures and regulations and transferred to appropriate waste management facilities so

that the Proposed Action would not contribute to significant adverse cumulative effects. Some PRSs would be bridged or avoided to allow for future remediation.

Waste Management. The Los Alamos County Landfill is located adjacent to the Eastern Bypass Road component of the Proposed Action, and its possible closure is contemplated within the next five years. Part of the site could continue being used as a transfer station and recycling facility. NNSA and the County are studying new landfill sites or alternate means of sanitary waste disposal at this time, and NNSA will develop an appropriate NEPA compliance strategy. Waste generation is expected to be minimal for the Proposed Action; however, overall waste generation at LANL during the next ten years, both from decontamination and demolition of buildings and through environmental restoration efforts, could be large. Construction and demolition wastes would be recycled and reused to the extent practicable. Existing waste treatment and disposal facilities would be used according to specific waste types. Solid wastes would be disposed of at the Los Alamos County Landfill or other appropriate permitted solid waste landfills. Demolition wastes would similarly be disposed of at appropriate permitted facilities. No aspect of the Proposed Action or other planned actions would individually result in NNSA establishing a new disposal facility or expanding an existing one.

(This page intentionally left blank.)